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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

August 29, 2011

FIRST TRUPACT-III SHIPMENT ARRIVES SAFELY AT THE WASTE ISOLATION PILOT PLANT

Washington, D.C. -- The U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) announced today that the first shipment of transuranic waste using the newly approved shipping package known as the TRUPACT-III safely arrived at the Waste Isolation Pilot Plant (WIPP) near Carlsbad, New Mexico. The shipment, which originated at the Savannah River Site (SRS) in South Carolina, arrived at WIPP on August 25. The new shipping package – the Transuranic Package Transporter Model 3 or TRUPACT-III – allows the Department to package and ship large-sized transuranic waste in a single box that would otherwise have to be broken down into smaller waste boxes. This new shipping package will help accelerate the pace of cleanup at sites across the country, while reducing risk to worker safety.

“This announcement is a clear example of how ongoing innovations within the Environmental Management program are helping to increase the efficiency of our operations, speed our cleanup efforts at Cold War sites across the country, and improve safety,” said Dave Huizenga, DOE’s Acting Assistant Secretary for Environmental Management.

Transuranic waste consists of materials such as clothing, tools, rags, residues, soil, debris, and other materials contaminated with plutonium or other hazardous chemicals. The TRUPACT-III shipping package allows the loading of large-sized transuranic waste into a single box, instead of repackaging it into smaller waste boxes. This will allow for faster processing and shipping, while significantly reducing the chance of potential exposure to the workers that are preparing the waste to be shipped to WIPP.

The TRUPACT-III will be used to ship large box waste at SRS as part of the site's American Recovery and Reinvestment Act work to complete its legacy transuranic waste program. In the future, the TRUPACT-III may also be used at other sites that have large transuranic box waste, such as the Hanford Site in Washington State, the Idaho National Laboratory, and the Los Alamos National Laboratory in New Mexico. Large-sized transuranic waste includes contaminated glove boxes, used motors, and large-scale analytical equipment.

The design and manufacturing of the TRUPACT-III was completed with \$12 million in funding from the Recovery Act.

WIPP is a DOE facility designed to safely dispose of legacy transuranic waste from the Cold War to protect people and the environment. Transuranic waste is permanently disposed in rooms mined out of a salt formation 2,150 feet below the surface. WIPP, which began waste disposal operations in 1999, is located 26 miles outside of Carlsbad, New Mexico.



The TRUPACT-III – or Transuranic (TRU) Package Transporter Model III – is a new TRU waste transportation package now in use for shipments to the Waste Isolation Pilot Plant (WIPP). The rectangular shipping package, at 8.2 feet wide, 8.7 feet tall, and 14 feet long, holds a single, large waste box. It contains up to 7.4 cubic meters of contact handled (CH) waste, which is equivalent to thirty-five 55-gallon drums. AREVA Federal Services, LLC of Tacoma, Washington, designed the TRUPACT-III, which was certified by the Nuclear Regulatory Commission in 2010. Other certified containers currently used to transport CH-TRU waste include the TRUPACT-II and the HalfPACT.

One TRUPACT-III has been designed and manufactured and DOE plans to eventually have a fleet of six for the shipment of oversized box waste from the Savannah River Site (SRS), the Idaho National Laboratory, and the Los Alamos National Laboratory, to WIPP.

The TRUPACT-III weighs about 43,600 pounds empty and up to 55,100 pounds when fully loaded. By comparison, the TRUPACT-II weighs up to 19,250 pounds loaded. DOE estimates it will ship approximately 250 shipments of CH-TRU waste from SRS directly to WIPP using the TRUPACT-III. This will enable the completion of SRS legacy TRU waste activities at the site.

The TRUPACT-III relies on a single, integrated structure to protect the waste containers that are placed inside it. Its packaging consists of inner and outer stainless steel plates and polyurethane foam to protect against potential punctures and fire danger. Prior to approval as a shipping package, the TRUPACT-III underwent rigorous testing, including being dropped from 30 feet onto a flat, unyielding surface and being subjected to a 40-inch drop onto a steel spike.



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